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PIMA ANNALS

By FRANK RUSSELL

In recent years the impression has been gaining ground that the majority of the American tribes kept mnemonic or pictographic records of events. The number (three) of chronologic records thus far published is comparatively very small and the number of references to others that have wholly disappeared is not much greater. I was therefore much interested in discovering that the Pimas of southern Arizona have long been accustomed to record events by means of notched sticks. Four sticks were "told" to me by the men in whose charge they were; to any other person they would have been absolutely meaningless. Chronologic sequence is subordinated to narrative, so that I have termed the records "annals" rather than calendars.

The sticks are without ornamentation. The years are marked by transverse notches; the events by smaller notches or rude symbols, each of which may mean many different things. In only one instance has a symbol come to have a conventional meaning — the **T** is used habitually by one annalist for the drinking festivals at which native liquor was formerly brewed at the harvest season; these were known to the whites by the name of "tizwin drunks." The saguaro cactus harvest marked the beginning of the year; in a land without winters we could not expect to find a "winter count." This also coincided with the maize and mesquite harvest and the onset of the torrid heat of summer.

The oldest of these annals date from the time of the meteoric shower of November 13, 1833, as do the oldest calendars among the Kiowa. Other older sticks are remembered by the old persons, but they have all been burned or otherwise destroyed.

The relative importance of the events is of some interest, so that I have tabulated them below. As usual with Amerindian records these contain much that is trivial and omit much that is important. The reasons for this have been adequately set forth by Mallery. We should also bear in mind the fact that the importance of an

event differs according as it is viewed by a Caucasian or an Amerindian eye.

Battles or skirmishes.....	66
Infrequent natural phenomena, eclipses, floods, earthquakes, etc.	14
Famines and years of abundance (only severe famines are noted)	5
Epidemics.....	11
Accidents, rattlesnake bites, lightning strokes, etc.....	13
Events relating to whites but not to Pimas.....	19
Relation with whites, building churches, schools, etc.....	21
Number of sorcerers killed, chiefly during epidemics.....	18
Changes of village sites (many changes not noted)	2
Races; relay, kicking-ball, horse.....	7
Festivals at which liquor was brewed.....	25
Trivial events including those of personal interest to the annalist	13
Number of persons killed during drinking bouts.....	24

As examples of the nature of these annals the following extracts are offered :

1833-34

During the moon preceding the meteoric shower the Yumas, armed with clubs, bows, and arrows, attacked the Maricopa village. The Yumas surprised the Maricopas and captured their women, whom they surrounded and tried to take away with them. They were about to cross the Gila with their captives when the Pimas arrived and attacked. The women took advantage of the confusion to escape into the chaparral. The Yumas fought bravely, but they were overpowered by numbers and few escaped to tell of their defeat.

In the early winter the meteoric shower took place. This event was followed by heavy rains that caused floods in the Gila and Salt rivers. The spectacle of falling stars was to the Pimas an augury of disaster and the speedy coming of floods was regarded as punishment for sins committed. What the sins might be they did not know, but concluded they must have offended some medicine-man who possessed great magic power. Many thought it must be the medicine-man Kakō who brought this calamity upon them, because they had not shown him the respect that he thought was due. It is said that when the flood was at its height he climbed a

cottonwood tree and thence proclaimed, in a loud voice, that he would perform certain miracles that would prove disastrous to them if they would not listen to him and show him respect.

Others declared that the floods were caused by the two sons of an old goddess Takwa-artam. When she saw the flood threatening to overwhelm the Pimas and Maricopas, she said to her sons, "Give me back my milk and then you can drown my people. The land is yet what it was when it was new." This puzzled the two brothers. They knew they could not return the milk that had nourished them in infancy, so they did not allow the flood to rise any higher but caused it to go down.

1836-37

At the beginning of this year the fruit of the saguaro was gathered and a large quantity of liquor prepared from it. All the men became intoxicated—too drunk to be on their guard against an attack from the Apaches. Early in the morning a woman started toward the hills to gather cactus fruit. She had not gone far when she saw a man mount a horse and start toward her. She suspected danger and walked backward for some distance before turning to flee. She got half way to the village before she was overtaken by the Apache, with whom she struggled so desperately as to raise a cloud of dust. Those who were somewhat sober hastened toward the place, but were too late to rescue the woman from being roped and dragged to death. However, they overtook the party of Apaches and killed five of them. On examining the dead Apaches it was found that their bodies were protected with rawhide armor; then the Pimas understood why their arrows had glanced off or jumped back.

1857-58

In the summer the Yumas came again, accompanied by the Mohaves. They sent scouts ahead who found the Maricopa women gathering mesquite beans. They killed all the women except one whom they kept to act as guide. She was the sister of a well-known Maricopa warrior and they compelled her to lead them to her brother's home. When they reached it she was killed with a club and the man was chased, but he was as good a runner as he

was a fighter, and they could not catch him. A Yuma told him to stop and die like a man, but he answered that if they could overtake him he would show them how to die like a man. The Maricopas fled from their village and the Yumas burned it. Messengers went to all the villages that day and under cover of the night the Pimas and Maricopas gathered; they kept coming until late the next forenoon. They found the Yumas encamped near the river at a spot where they had assaulted some women and a Pima had been killed while defending them. The Yumas had spent the night in singing their war-songs. Now and again a medicine-man would come forward to puff whiffs of smoke in order that their cause might find favor with the gods. The Pima-Maricopa council ended about noon, and it was decided to surround the Yumas and make special effort to prevent them from reaching the river to obtain water. Formed in a semicircle the Pimas and Maricopas shot down the Yumas on three sides. Soon the Yumas began to waver and become exhausted from thirst in the heat of the day. They made several attempts to break through the line, but failed, and finally gathered in a compact body to make a last attempt to reach the river. At that moment the Pimas and Maricopas who were on horseback rushed in upon the enemy and rode them down. After a hand-to-hand combat the Yumas were all killed except one who was stunned by the blow of a club and lay unconscious under a heap of dead. During the night he recovered his senses and escaped. This was the bloodiest fight known and the Yumas came here to fight no more.

The annals elsewhere narrate in detail the methods of fighting, which were quite unlike those in vogue among most tribes. The courage of both sides in the above described contest was of course sustained by their belief in magic power. Like oriental religious fanatics they felt themselves imbued with superhuman strength. The number killed, variously estimated by whites at from four to six hundred, shows how important was the engagement.

1881-82

The Pima police were sent from Sacaton to arrest some Kwahadk living at their village about fifty miles south of the agency. The

Kwahadk had been drinking tizwin, and as they had never been interfered with for this by the agent, they were not conscious of having transgressed any laws. Furthermore, drunkenness was the rule among the few whites with whom they had come in contact and it was a privilege the Kwahadk indulged in but once or twice a year. Old inhabitants at Sacaton tell me that the agent was working prisoners on a reservation farm and selling the crop for his own profit. The Pimas had been committing no misdemeanors or crimes that offered any excuse for imprisoning them, and the crops needed attention. He therefore ordered the police to bring in the Kwahadk dead or alive. One of the young Kwahadk frankly declared his innocence of any intentional transgressions and defied the police to take him from his home. He was promptly shot. As the police were returning to Sacaton they were overtaken by the father of the murdered man, who told them that he had nothing to live for since they had killed his son and they might as well kill him too. They obligingly complied with his request.